

**REMARKS BY
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U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE U.N. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
TO THE BUSINESS COUNCIL OF ALABAMA
POINT CLEAR, ALABAMA
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AS DELIVERED

Thank you very much Lieutenant Governor Baxley for that kind introduction.¹ It is so flattering to be introduced by one of Alabama's most senior officials to an audience of such distinguished participants. This protocol rivals that of the United Nations General Assembly!

I salute the Business Council of Alabama under the outstanding leadership of Charles Nailen,² Johnny Johns,³ and my old buddy Bill Canary.⁴ Please give them a big hand! (*Applause.*) Billy and I had the privilege of working for President George Bush ("41"). He found his match after I managed to survive his initiations. In a preemptive and unilateral move, (*laughter*) Billy decided that I should be under his wing, despite the fact that I outranked him. (*Laughter.*) He and I have become the best of friends.

As New Yorkers, we both have the attitude of "*If I can make it there, I'll make it anywhere.*" (*Laughter.*) In 1976 I arrived in America as a refugee to start my new life as a free man. My mantra then was "*Adapt and be adopted.*" When Billy decided to follow his heart and move to Alabama, he did not need me to tell him to adapt and be adopted. He came, he saw, he conquered. Thank y'all (*laughter*) for adopting him. (*Applause.*)

I had my first glimpse of Alabama in 1973. My brother, who came for training at Redstone Arsenal,⁵ sent me a few postcards. He described the beautiful scenery he saw along I-65 during a trip from Huntsville to Mobile. And he always ended with the words "*This is a beautiful country!*" In 1990 Martha and I came to attend Billy's wedding to that gorgeous Southern Belle Leura Garrett in Montgomery. We made a grand entrance by starting in Huntsville. The Army was kind enough to show us where my brother used

¹ **Lieutenant Governor Lucy Baxley** was elected Alabama State Treasurer in 1994 and reelected in 1998. She was elected Lieutenant Governor in 2002.

² **C. Charles Nailen, Jr.** President of BBG Specialty Foods, Inc. and GGG Foods, Inc. is Chairman of the Business Council of Alabama.

³ **John D. Johns**, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Protective Life Corporation, is the First Vice Chairman, and incoming Chairman, of the Business Council of Alabama.

⁴ **William J. Canary** was appointed, in 1989, as Special Assistant to President George Bush ("41") for Intergovernmental Affairs. He served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Trucking Association before becoming the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Business Council of Alabama in March 2003.

⁵ **Redstone Arsenal** has served for more than 40 years as the Army's center for missile and rocket programs. In October 1997, the U.S. Army Missile Command at Redstone Arsenal combined with the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command at St. Louis, Missouri, to form the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM).

to live and gave me a framed copy of his class roster. Now in Point Clear, I believe I have completed the journey my brother took 31 years ago.

I am very impressed with the program of this year's Conference. I am even more impressed after hearing Governor Riley⁶ mention that Alabama is first among the 14 Southeastern States,⁷ which together make up the 4th largest economy in the world.

When we received the invitation from Billy, my staff told me that I was supposed to be in Argentina. I told them to delay the trip by a week: *"Alabama comes first, (applause) before Argentina in both English and Spanish."* (Laughter.)

My presentation is on international politics at the United Nations. As the Organization enters its 59th year, its activities and history offer a myriad of discussion points. I believe the most critical for its future relevance and success is its relationship with the United States.

But first, let me tell you about my introduction to New York. After picking apples in Connecticut, I decided to move to the Big Apple (laughter) in January 1977. While standing at a Manhattan street corner, I saw yellow Checkers with "Drivers Wanted" signs. I called and was told to go and take a test. It was the most difficult test I have ever taken in my life. (Laughter.) There was a series of questions, mainly about directions. One asked: *"How do you get from the Waldorf Astoria to the United Nations?"* I had no idea where these places were, much less how to get from one to another. I may have answered all the questions wrong. At the end, I showed the test to the examiner. He glanced at the piece of paper. And he looked at me from head to toe, again, and again. Finally, he said: *"You passed!"* (Laughter.)

If I were driving a cab today, some of you might jump in and ask *"How do you get away from the United Nations?"* (Laughter.)

The relationship between the United States and the United Nations has always been dynamic – and at times better than others. For example, the U.N. Security Council rallied behind the United States after "Nine Eleven." But the Council was not willing to heed President Bush's call in early 2003 to clean up Iraq. So we went in with our own coalition to do the right thing.

America helped to found the United Nations and remains committed to it in principle and practice. As President Bush said in May 2003, *"This is America's agenda in the world—from the defeat of terror, to the alleviation of disease and hunger, to the spread of human liberty. We welcome, and we need, the help, advice, and wisdom of friends and allies."*⁸

⁶ **Governor Bob Riley** was sworn into office as Alabama's 52nd chief executive on January 20, 2003, after representing the state for six years in the United States Congress.

⁷ Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia.

⁸ President's Radio Address before embarking on European and Middle East Tour, May 31, 2003

Having put that into perspective, let's turn to see how the Bush administration intends to engage the U.N. at this autumn's General Assembly session.

The United States is determined to meet the major challenges of this century while helping people around the world realize the abundant potential that freedom and democracy offer. This is so whether we are trying to stem a modern-day slave trade, ban all human cloning, promote freedom through democracies, or help others help themselves economically. Key to our efforts is effective multilateral diplomacy based on principled, consistent leadership and core values.

The President is strongly committed to promoting human dignity. He once said: *"We propose our principles; we must not impose our culture. Yet the basic principles of human freedom and dignity are universal. People should be able to say what they think. Worship as they wish. Elect those who govern them."*⁹

Combating human trafficking is an issue that goes straight to the heart of human dignity. Any trafficking in persons is wrong, and all nations have a responsibility to confront it. Especially heinous is the sexual exploitation of children. The United States is leading the way to combat this country-by-country. We will seek a collective pledge to do the same.

Banning all forms of human cloning is a goal we have advanced for several years and we hope for a U.N. pronouncement on this.

America is also promoting economic development. The Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002 agreed that each country, rich or poor, has the primary responsibility for its own economic and social development. If we can show how to fish instead of merely giving fish, the people's energies and resources will be better mobilized for real development to take root for prosperity. To this end President Bush established the Millennium Challenge Account, Charged with promoting sustainable growth in the world's poorest countries, and thus ending the terrible cycles of poverty and dependency.¹⁰

As business people, you will be interested to know that there is a U.N. Commission on Private Sector and Development.¹¹ It reaffirmed that the private sector is the engine of economic growth, which in turn reduces poverty and creates jobs. This is a big change from the Cold War U.N. where the state was everything and the private sector did not exist in its parlance.

⁹ Governor George W. Bush, "A Distinctly American Internationalism," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, California, November 19, 1999

¹⁰ President Bush's Address to the Inter-American Development Bank, March 14, 2002

¹¹ The **U.N. Commission on Private Sector and Development** is Co-Chaired by The Right Honorable Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada and His Excellency Ernesto Zedillo, Director of Yale University Center for the Study of Globalization and Former President of Mexico.

As goes prosperity, so goes freedom. Democracies cannot exclude either. We will work this Fall to solidify a “caucus of democracies” to bring their values to bear on U.N. decisions and activities.

In each of these and other initiatives that we will bring to the General Assembly, the principles of United States engagement are quite simple.

First: We want the U.N. to live up to the vision of its founders.

Second: We want multilateralism that is effective -- that is more than just words on paper. We want good results, whether it is in refugee relief, setting aviation and maritime standards, increasing literacy, or providing new textbooks that teach tolerance, not hatred.

Third: We seek good stewardship of U.N. resources. America’s taxpayers contribute close to a quarter of the U.N.’s budget. Success depends upon whether the organization can be more effective and efficient with its resources. Its two-year budget has surpassed \$3 billion for the first time. We will continue to champion results-based budgeting, best practices, and other management reforms.

International organizations, of which the U.N. is the largest, offer additional means to promote international peace and security in conjunction with advancing political and economic freedoms. They also enable us to leverage our political, financial, and military resources to manage better international threats or crises as they arise.

In spite of Iraq-related tensions among members, we are pursuing a broad agenda at the U.N. At the same time, we are trying to focus our efforts on the issues of greatest significance to our interests and values. The United States leads the way in voluntary contributions to U.N. humanitarian efforts. We remain the largest donor to the World Food Program, contributing 52 percent of its budget to help feed 72 million people in 82 countries. We also contribute 25 percent to the budget of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. We are the leading donor to international efforts to deal with the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

It is often said that the United States acts alone, and is myopically concerned about its own interests. But you can see from my points that this is simply untrue. International peace, long-term stability, democracy building, humanitarian relief, human rights are all in our national interest. Reducing hunger and illiteracy are as important to eliminating the hatred that breeds oppression, civil war, and terrorism as standing up any multinational force.

Under the distinguished leadership of Ambassador John Danforth,¹² I am honored to represent you at the United Nations. Each time I walk in, other representatives look at

¹² **Ambassador John C. Danforth** was elected Attorney General of Missouri in 1968 and reelected in 1972. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1976 and reelected in 1982 and 1988. In September 1999, he was appointed Counsel by Attorney General Janet Reno to investigate the federal raid on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas. In September 2001 President George W. Bush appointed him as

me. Through me, they see you. They see America. They see its opportunities and its promises. They want to know what I have to say. The place suddenly becomes quiet the minute they hear: "*On behalf of the United States...*" That is my proudest moment! Thank you. (*Applause.*)

This document can be obtained at www.un.int/usa/04ss0807.pdf.